

UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE**UNIVERSITY COURT**

A meeting of the University Court was held on 12 September 2014.

(Note: this business meeting formed part of the annual Court Retreat.)

Present: Mr EF Sanderson (in the Chair), Principal Professor CP Downes, Professor RJ Abboud, Professor L Bidaut, Mr R Bint, Dr WGC Boyd, Professor Sue Black, Ms SC Campbell, Mr J Elliot, Mr IC Howie, Mr I MacKinnon, Ms B Malone, Professor GJ Mires, Ms CA Potter, Dr AD Reeves, Mr KA Richmond, Mr D Taylor, Mr RJ Van Mulders.

In Attendance: University Secretary, Director of Finance, Director of Human Resources, Director of Policy, Governance & Legal Affairs, and Clerk to Court.

Apologies: Lord Provost, Mr RS Bowie, Ms S Krawczyk, and Mr IDM Wright.

101. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

In a verbal report to the Court the Principal highlighted items of significance arising since the meeting of the Court in June. In doing so he reminded the Court that, as a result of her departure from the University at the end of August, Dr Sam Crouch had demitted office as a member of Court. Members wished Dr Crouch well in her future endeavours and asked that their thanks for her service to the Court and the University be passed on.

The Court formally noted the appointment of Professor Nic Beech as the Vice-Principal & Head of the College of Arts & Social Sciences, effective from 1 October 2014, and the arrival over the summer of the new Dean of Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design, Professor Paul Harris.

The Principal went on to highlight management arrangements in place within the School of Medicine following the departure of the Dean to the University of Edinburgh and also arrangements for the appointment of the Director of External Relations and Head of Marketing positions following the departure of Ms Judith Barnard earlier in the summer. Members noted that Mr Denis Taylor would serve on the appointing panel for the latter two posts. Lastly, members noted that Professor David Finkelstein had indicated his intention to step down from the position of Dean of Humanities, and the Principal told members that arrangements regarding the appointment of a successor would be announced shortly.

The Principal highlighted the ongoing review of organisational and management structures led by the Vice-Principal (Learning & Teaching) and members noted the University-wide consultation process that had been put in place. In response to questions the Principal confirmed that a report from the review would be provided to the Court in due course, hopefully at its next meeting on 27 October 2014.

Turning to student recruitment matters, the Court noted that data relating to the improved undergraduate student recruitment figures for entry in 2014/15 and the improved National Student Survey (NSS) results would be covered elsewhere in the Retreat agenda. Members were pleased to note the improved RUK and international undergraduate student recruitment figures resulting from the strong performance in clearing and from the improved conversion of offers to acceptances and they looked forward to fuller debate of the figures and approach during the strategic sessions of the Retreat.

Turning to the '5 Million Questions' programme of events, the Principal highlighted the University's role as a leader of debate and informed, evidence-based discussion. Members noted that the final event in the series on 7 October 2014 would be led by Professor Chris Whatley and would include a review of Professor Whatley's career as well as a post-referendum reflection on the campaign for independence, the result, and the future for Scotland.

Lastly, the Principal highlighted the receipt over the summer of the Scottish Government's Ministerial Letter of Guidance to the Scottish Funding Council. Members noted that Universities Scotland was engaged in discussion regarding the indicated intent to legislate for areas of governance not explicitly covered within the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance.

The Court decided: to note the report.

102. **UPDATE ON THE BIOMEDICAL AND LIFE SCIENCES TEACHING PROJECT**

The Court received an update on the progress of the Biomedical and Life Sciences Teaching review project including minutes from the Redundancy Committee meeting on 31 July 2014, an update on Voluntary Severance (VS) applications and a high-level financial analysis of the process. The Chair of Court also shared with members a letter received from Dundee University and College Union (DUCU) in relation to the project. Members noted the comments within the letter and that DUCU had recently been invited to contribute to a 'lessons learned' exercise instigated by senior management. While the Court noted that the Redundancy Committee had been satisfied with the process, members considered it important to gather the experiences of individual staff members and were keen to see outcomes of the exercise reported to both the Human Resources Committee and the Court in due course. The Chair confirmed that he would write to the DUCU President to highlight this position.

Turning to the report, members were pleased to note that no compulsory redundancies had been required as a result of the review. Court was reminded that the focus of the project was to enhance the quality of provision and interactions with students across all academic areas of Biomedical & Life Sciences Teaching and informed that initial signs were positive with regard to enhancements resulting from the new structure. In response to questions the Director of Finance outlined the significant financial savings resulting from the project relative to projections previously considered.

The Court also sought the opinion of the academic staff members on Court with regard to the morale of staff and proposed that this issue be considered in further detail at the next meeting of the Human Resources Committee.

Noting the need to proceed with future projects in a manner which acknowledged the complexity of the organisation, the varied range of activities across the disciplines, and the discrete nature of emerging projects, members indicated that bearing in mind the best interests of the staff involved it would be preferable to take forward such projects as quickly as possible while still ensuring that full and meaningful consultations were pursued in relation to all potential projects.

- The Court decided:**
- (i) to approve the minutes of the Redundancy Committee; (ii) to note the position outlined in the paper with respect to the final outcome of the project including Voluntary Severance and financial aspects; and
 - (iii) to note the letter received from DUCU and suggest that the outcomes of the 'lessons learned' exercise be considered at the Human Resources Committee and at Court in due course.

103. MEMBERSHIP OF COURT

The Court noted that as a result of the departure of Dr Crouch from the University, and consequently the Court, an election would be held by the Senate in October 2014 to identify a successor for her on Court. Members noted that the Governance & Nominations Committee would, at its meeting on 6 October, review membership of the Committees of Court in light of Dr Crouch's departure, but that a replacement was required on an immediate basis to serve on the Welfare & Ethical Use of Animals Committee in a lay capacity and that Dr William Boyd had offered to serve.

- The Court decided:** to approve the nomination of Dr Boyd as a Court member on the Welfare & Ethical Use of Animals Committee, but to suggest that, when considering membership of the Committees of Court, the Governance & Nominations Committee should give thought to the number of committees served by individual members of staff to ensure that this was appropriately balanced.

104. UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING CONFERENCE

- The Court decided:** to approve the appointment of Mr Keith Mackle as the Court's representative on the Conference of the University of Stirling.

105. APPOINTMENT OF THE INTERNAL AUDITOR

- The Court decided:** to ratify the appointment of Scott-Moncrieff for the provision of internal audit services for the period 1 August 2014 to 31 July 2016 with the possibility of renewal thereafter for one further year, as approved by the Audit Committee on 6 August 2014 under powers delegated to it by the Court at its meeting on 9 June 2014.

106. DUSA MANIFESTO

As with previous years, the President of the Dundee University Student's Association (DUSA) circulated the DUSA manifesto for 2014/15. Members noted that the manifesto was refreshed on an annual basis as a tool to communicate with new and existing students with regard to the structure and activities of the DUSA executive and also to aid in ensuring continuity to the work of the DUSA executive.

The Court decided: to note the manifesto.

107. ALIGNMENT TO THE SCOTTISH CODE OF GOOD HE GOVERNANCE

The Court received a copy of the University's return to Universities Scotland in relation to the alignment of governance practice at Dundee with the Scottish Code of Good HE Governance. Members noted that the alignment to the Code was a matter that had been considered by the Review of Court Effectiveness Working Group and would be the subject of a number of recommendations from that group. The Court reiterated its support for the implementation of changes to ensure compliance with the Code and noted that recommendations from the Review of Court Effectiveness would be presented to the Court at its meeting on 27 October 2014.

The Court decided: to note the return.

108. GOVERNOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Court members were encouraged to review the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE) Governor Development Programme (GDP) 2014-15 brochure.

The Court decided: to note the brochure and to ask members to convey their own interest in attending sessions to the Clerk to Court.